

Observatory Hill Inc community organization
Petitioner,
And

POSTAL RATE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMIN. OFFICER

JUN 21 2006

United States Postal Service
Respondent.

Petition For Review

To the Secretary of the Postal rate Commission:

1. Petitioner is a Pennsylvania (501-c3), known as Observatory Hill Inc. It is located at 8999 East Street in the city of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. This petition is submitted by petitioner as a customer of the respondent (representing 6000 residents within the surrounding area, 2000 seniors who will be impacted by the planned closure. Six hundred and six petitions have been sign by all ages of people mainly senior citizens.
2. On May 16, 2006, the postal service put up two laminated posters on front entrance door and inside bulletin board to Observatory Finance Station that said: This Post office will permanently close June 16, 2006. Only one month for citizens to respond. This is an example of how the postal service works with the community in and around Pittsburgh's Observatory Hill Northside. The postal service action should be should be sufficient reason to finally dispose of an appeal by the postal service to close the Observatory Finance Station.
3. There was no reason given or notice put up as to how to appeal this action. The facility makes a profit of approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000 a year. The location has 10,000 cars passing by per day or through the business main corridor just 65 feet away from the post office. This is a profit making facility in an area where seniors walk to the post office as part of their routine and families need the service, along with business and it is clear the post office helps to **anchor** the local business and residential community.
4. This post office has served the community since **1940**. The 20th State Representatives office is located to the left and The Magistrates office is on the right. There are 33 businesses, 6 churches, 3 schools, a firehouse, 5,294 residents, and a huge volume of automobiles passing by the Post Office and or through the main four way intersection just 65 feet from the post office.

Perry Traditional Academy High School sits up on a hill directly across the street from the post office and. There are 125 teachers who use the facility. The Post Office is located on Perrysville Avenue, which is a state highway. The area has one of the cities biggest five parks called Riverview Park. It is the only city park with a working Observatory, and horses. The area sits on a mountain and has scores of homes built between 1890 and 1930. This could be the reason scores of

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seniors walk to the post office. Walking to the post office is part of their daily routine. Riverview Park, the homes, the traffic, the business result in people residing 40 to 60 years in the community and Riverview Park and Perrysville highway the area its urban, rural, suburban, state park feel and appeal and reinforce the opportunity for the postal service and community to work together for mutual accelerated benefit.

5. The current post office is being closed despite strong opposition from Observatory Hills 2000 seniors, the business district, The Medicine Shop that sends out 121 prescription drugs per month to seniors by mail in surrounding neighborhoods. Despite the fact it is more convenient and profitable for the postal service, and community to be served by the post office. Seniors, families and those who want to continue using the post office. We are told by the postal service it is more convenient to use the alternate postal sights 3 to 4 miles. Such a move will provide a hardship for seniors and families and those who depend upon the local Observatory Post Office.

It is hard to understand how come a facility like the Observatory Finance Station has to close when it has never been an inactive post office and it is profitable given the hours of operation were reduced in 2002 from 8am to 4:30pm. There was a decline in revenues and service by at least 50%. The current hours prevent and restrict citizens from reaching the post office in time before it closes. Who ever heard of a post office open from 10am to 2pm. The post office should stay open and the reason to close is so inconsistent with reality. The hours should be expanded.

Seniors want to use the post office after Perry High School students return to classes after lunch. Seniors are a bit intimidated by the sheer number of students out to lunch around 11:30am to 1pm. This was mentioned to the postal service years ago so hours could be extended from 10am to 2pm to 10am to 6pm. This is information the Observatory Hill Incorporated Community organization would have provided to the postal service. The Observatory Finance Station still brings in revenues that cover postal service expenses. Again it does not make sense for postal customers in this area to go 3 to 4 miles away. When there is a critical mass of people who want to do their United States Postal business at the Observatory Finance Station in Observatory (serving Summer Hill, Brighton Heights and parts of Perry Hill Top).

(Note: Letter to Richard Sekinger: Postmaster, Pittsburgh; and Petition To Keep Observatory Hill Post Office Open!).

The respondent continually ignored petitioner's request that it be allowed to participate fully in the decision process. In 2002 when the hours of operation went from 8:30am to 4:30pm and were reduced to 10:00am to 2pm only box holders were notified, and a letter was tack on the bulletin board. No verbal mention was given that the hours of operation were going to change. A patron had to ask in order to find out about the reduction in hours. Any community meetings scheduled were held at a time and place not convenient to the neighborhood(s). And the community was not made

aware how the community could rally to maintain the hours or even today how they could fully participate in the postal process until late in October 2005 (note Susan Rooney OHI letter to Postal Service).

Postal could have notified the community by sending out a mailer or a questionnaire sent to affected communities and meet with the community at a place and a time that is not intimidating like the California Post Office General Mail facility and meet in the community where the surrounding are friendlier and the times are convenient to the public was and so....

The summer of 2005 the postal service proposed to close the Observatory Finance and have residents travel 3 to 4 miles away yet they again did not notify the community door to door or through the mail service. The community was not aware of the proposal and the postal service notified 35 box holders and put up letter on stations bulletin board yet patrons were not notified by the clerk that a proposal to close was in affect by the postal service on California Avenue mail facility, Northside. Patrons were only notified once the few who read the memo actually ask specifically about the proposal. And it was not know that 8 people who met with postal officials and 16 replies from box holder would represent the huge volume of seniors and other who consistently use the post office. Who would have thought that the Observatory Stations demise would come in this fashion given it has provide a service to so many people and it is a postal service for the people in order to have primarily service to customers and not be based upon revenue or volume of people using it yet the post office still brings in an income and is used slightly more in 2006.

5. The closing of the Observatory Finance Station is in violation of the regulations that appear in Title 39, United States Code, Section 404(b), while the implementing regulations appear in Title 39 Code of Federal Regulations. Part 241.3.

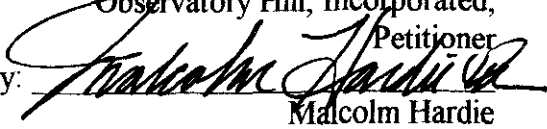
The respondents own formal process for determining when to replace a post office and reasons for proposing such changes in postal service are fully disclosed at a stage when customers can make a helpful contribution towards the final decision, in that respondent failed to (i) to obtain and evaluate input from customers in the community at a time and place convenient to the community at large and meet in the Observatory Hill Community to secure input from those who would be severely impacted and hard hit by the proposal to close and seek alternate service 3 to 4 miles for seniors and families (ii) the Postmaster would not attend community meetings for security reasons and made it difficult for seniors and families to fully participate in the proposal to close The Observatory Finance Station Docket Number 15214; (iii) conduct a feasibility study; (iv) hold public meetings in the community concerning the process to close; (v) The Postal service did not except information gathered from the community or except input to be included in its proposal to close for lower level or upper level management in Washington DC. (vi) The 60 day written proposal could not be read by patrons visiting post office and clerk did not direct patrons to read document on bulletin board unless the patron specifically ask; (vii) provide the community especially seniors, with written service proposals, findings, appeal rights

were not done; (viii) notice of Rate Commissions final determination not posted at affected post office for 30 days

(viii) affected post office and customers not given adequate 60 days notice before the proposed date of closure. And written service proposal, findings and appeal rights were not given out yet had to be request ion in a letter by OHI (Observatory Hill Inc); (x) even without an appeal, postal regulations specify post office is not to be closed sooner than 60 days after the public posting of the final decision;

(xi) Contact city officials for community demographics and growth trends; (xii) Questionnaire was not sent to affected communities to include areas affected and or served were not held to embrace Observatory Hill, Summer Hill, parts of Perry Hill Top and Brighton Heights Road).

6. The postal service here did not follow the process and inconsistencies did prevail. Revenues are stable and increasing and citizen usage is not down and so we ask that the hours be increased from 10am to 6pm so the revenues will increase by 100%. Allow Observatory Finance Station one year from June 16, 2006 to June 16, 2007 to be as successful as the postal service wants it to be. And direct the postal service to work with seniors families local business and the community organization. Again the post office has been in the community at least since 1940. The process to close was not followed and the postal service did not allow the community adequately time to respond In addition, the postal service did not except crucial information from the communities representative: Observatory Hill Incorporated. Their finding and input were not made part the proposal to close Observatory Finance Station and so there were no lower levels talk and no upper level magement sharing in Washington DC.
7. Based on the foregoing, petitioner respectfully requests that respondent be compelled to continue operating the current post office located in the observatory Hill area right across the street from Perry Traditional High School Pittsburgh.

Observatory Hill, Incorporated,
Petitioner
By: 
Malcolm Hardie
President
Observatory Hill, Inc.
P.O.Box 7651
Pittsburgh, PA 15214-0651

Richard Sekinger: Postmaster, Pittsburgh.

The Observatory Finance Station closure will impact, affect and be a hardship for 2000 seniors and others who use the Observatory Hill Finance Station.

The location of the Observatory Hill Station provides a critical mass of people for revenues to far exceed past expectations. Postal revenues will increase by allowing the Observatory Finance Station to provide service to customers 10 am to 6pm Monday to Friday and Saturday 9am to 12pm. Box holders can access their boxes 7am Monday to Friday up to 6pm and Saturday 7am until 2pm.

The areas seniors, families and those who do not have transportation to travel 3 to 4 miles away will partner with the post office. These patrons will generate foot traffic because their concerns are considered and acted upon. Seniors **walk** in this area because of Riverview Park. Why should we force seniors to wait, to ask, to depend upon their children to drive them to a post office 3 to 4 miles away? What about those seniors who do not have a family? The post office sits on a prime piece of real estate. It is the most convenient post office in the area sitting on top of a mountain called Observatory Hill.

This post office already serves Summer Hill, Brighton Heights, and parts of Perry Hill Top. There are four to five senior centers in the area. The Reformed Presbyterian Women's Center, Steel Workers Building, Brighton Senior Center, and The Senior Center on the corner of Burgess and Perrysville. There are 6 churches. Perry Traditional Academy High School is directly across the street and 125 teachers utilize the post office. The local pharmacy: The Medicine shop ships 121 prescription drug packages to seniors outside the area each month. It is located 95 feet away. The 20th Legislative District Office is on the left and Magistrates office is on its right of the post office. These offices and their clients use the post office. Perrysville Avenue is a state highway. The **volume** of automobiles passing the post office and connecting the main corridor is just 65 feet from the post office. The Observatory Hill Finance Station is a diamond in the rough. The postal **location** is ripe for innovative, visionary postal service that integrates its Observatory customer base attracting others and incorporates best strategies to increase revenues and provide outstanding postal service to customers.

Please allow people to continue to have pride and dignity in their ability to have their post office as part of their daily routine. A few minor alterations will signal a new day, thrill the community and increase business further. Allow the Observatory Hill Finance station to remain a vital community anchor that receives the attention it needs to provide excellent postal service to its customers and increase profits.

Observatory Finance Station is a viable **community asset**. It's a contributing reason people come to Observatory Hill in many ways. It's a respected and trusted business providing a much-needed service to all patrons. It's a **convenient** place to do your United States Postal business. **Senior citizens** need and want the post office open. Closure hurts 2000 seniors. It's a place easily accessible for single-family members. The post office is a viable asset for business owners at home or in the area to patronize. Please: keep post office open/ partner with the community. **Malcolm Hardie:** Resident/President O.H.I

To Keep Observatory Hill Post Office Open!

Residents want the United States Postal emblem proudly displayed above the building's front door to emphasize, and showcase the fact that this is a United States Post Office, open and ready for use now. The hours of operations must be clearly visible by citizens walking or driving by. This Post Office is one community **ASSET** the citizens of Observatory Hill and surrounding communities **WANT OPEN!**

[illegible]

POSTMASTER



October 3, 2005

Susan Rooney, President
Observatory Hill, Inc.
P.O. Box 7651
Pittsburgh, PA 15214-0651

Dear Ms. Rooney:

Thank you for the invitation to attend a community forum on the proposed closing of the Observatory Finance Station to be held on October 12.

Regrettably, the 60-day public posting of the proposal and invitation for customer comments has passed and we are in the review and decision stage of the proposal. The public posting was conducted from July 11, 2005 through September 9, 2005 at our Observatory, Allegheny and General Mail Facility (Kilbuck) Stations.

I have attached the Summary of Post Office Change Regulations that was made available to all who attended the community meeting on May 5, 2005 at the General Mail Facility. At the meeting, participants were made aware that their comments, along with those received during the 60-day public posting period would become part of the official proposal and would receive consideration by both local Postal management and Postal Headquarters when rendering a final decision.

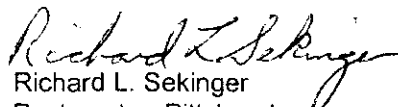
If Postal Headquarters finds that our local proposal is warranted, a Public Notice of Final Decision will be posted for 30 days, allowing the community the opportunity to appeal to the Postal Rate Commission. At that point, the Postal Rate Commission will render a final decision within 120 days.

If Postal Headquarters finds that the proposal is not warranted, the proposal will be denied and no further action will be taken to discontinue the Observatory Finance Station.

While I appreciate the invitation to participate in your community meeting, it would be inappropriate for me to attend since it is being conducted outside of the timeframes outlined above, which are required under Title 39, United States Code, Section 404(b).

I appreciate and respect the comments and concerns we have received from the community, and can assure you that careful consideration will be given to all issues raised. We remain committed to providing the Observatory community with excellent service. Please contact our Consumer Affairs Office at (412) 359-7845 if you need additional information.

Sincerely,


Richard L. Sekinger
Postmaster, Pittsburgh

Enclosure

Cc: Keith J. Beppler, District Manager/Lead Executive

SUMMARY OF POST OFFICE CHANGE REGULATIONS

Certain regulations based on federal law apply when postal managers propose to replace a post office with an alternate form of postal service. These regulations are designed to ensure that the reasons for proposing such changes in postal service are fully disclosed at a stage when customers can make helpful contributions toward a final decision. The full text of the statutory regulations appears in Title 39, United States Code, Section 404(b), while the implementing regulations appear in Title 39, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 241.3.

An initial investigation and any subsequent formal proposal to discontinue a post office originate with postal field managers responsible for post offices in that area. The proposal must explain the services recommended as substitutes and the rationale that supports this recommendation. The written proposal is prominently posted for 60 days at affected post offices, along with an "Invitation for Comments," which formally invites customer comments. At the end of the 60-day comment period, additional review is made at lower and upper levels of postal management.

When a final decision is made at Postal Headquarters in Washington, DC, that decision is posted in affected post offices for 30 days, during which customers may appeal the decision to the Postal Rate Commission in Washington, DC. The Postal Rate Commission has 120 days to consider and decide an appeal. Even without an appeal, no post office may be closed sooner than 60 days after the public posting of the final decision.

